

St Caolan's Primary School

Anti- Bullying Policy

Pastoral Care

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Review September 2023

Anti-Bullying Policy

Our School Ethos

An effective Pastoral Care system is required as a result of the rapid changes taking place within society. Our children require all the skills necessary to deal with the rising pressures of media, family, education and peer pressures which they will encounter in their daily lives.

In St Caolan's Primary School Pastoral Care is composed of different policies, programmes and procedures.

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct

These encourage each individual child to develop to their full potential, by catering for their spiritual, moral, emotional, intellectual, physical and social needs in a safe and secure environment.

The ethos of our school is founded on Catholic values where tolerance and respect for others is paramount. It is our intention that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment

Section 1 Introduction and Rationale

At St Caolan's Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

The governors and staff of St Caolan's Primary School are committed to creating and maintaining a safe, secure and happy environment for all our children and staff. Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse, which can cause emotional and physical distress and will not be tolerated. We strive to create a positive and nurturing ethos where everyone is treated with mutual respect and positive relationships are promoted. From time to time pupils may be victims of bullying despite our caring ethos, our nurturing environment and effective Positive Behaviour Policy All staff (teaching and non-teaching collectively work together to create an anti-bullying culture.

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Section 2 Context

This Anti Bullying Policy has been developed, including the legislative and policy/guidance framework applicable. This includes:

The Legislative Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978

The Policy & Guidance Context;

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)

The International Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

Provides a legal definition of bullying

It places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.

It requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.

It sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:

- In school, during the school day
- While travelling to and from school
- When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. On a school trip)
- When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school under Shared Education)

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It requires that the policy be updated at least every four years. This Policy will be updated in September 2023.

The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:

‘Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils’ (A.17)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child’s right to:

- Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
- Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
- Education. (A.28)

Section 3 Ethos & Principles

Principles and values, which St Caolan’s Primary School upholds:

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying, children have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- We value the views and contributions of children; we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
- We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.
- We treat all children fairly and will ensure school rules are implemented fairly and consistently.

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Section 4 Consultation and Participation

This Policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

The consultation with pupils included

- Consultative workshops with pupils and class-based activities

The consultation with parents/carers included

- Information with parents/carers at the Curriculum Morning
- Engagement with the PTFA

The consultation with all members of the school community included

- Discussion activity for all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Discussion activity with The Board of Governors

Section 5 What is Bullying?

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which must be used.

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

(1) In this Act “bullying” includes, but is not limited to, the repeated use

of—(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

(b) any other act, or

(c) any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

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(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.

Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

It is important to note that while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to decide on whether to classify it as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident
- evidence of pre-meditation
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)
- impact of the incidents on wider school community
- previous relationships between those involved
- any previous incidents involving the individuals

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

Verbal or written acts

- saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- making fun of others
- calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
- telling lies or spread false rumours about others
- try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s

Physical acts

- Hitting
- kicking
- pushing

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- shoving
- material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions

Omission (Exclusion)

- Leaving someone out of a game
- Refusing to include someone in group work

Electronic Acts

- Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above
- Impersonating someone online to cause hurt
- Sharing images (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

St Caolan's Primary School does not consider this to be an exhaustive list and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

It is advised that when Staff are dealing with incidents of bullying they should be mindful to consider the various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the act. These include, but are not limited to:

Age	Political affiliation	Religion
Appearance	Gender identity	Disability / SEN
Breakdown in peer	Sexual orientation	Ability
Relationships	Pregnancy	Looked After Child
Community	Marital status	Young Carer
Background	Race	

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Bullying is an emotive issue; therefore, it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. For that reason, we will not refer to a child as 'a bully', nor will we refer to a child as 'a victim'. Instead, we will refer to the child describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

A child displaying bullying behaviours

A child experiencing bullying behaviours

All members of the school community are to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

Following the definitions of emotional and physical harm which are set out in the DE Guidance. In determining 'harm' we define:

Emotional or psychological harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.

Physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Section 6 Preventative Measures

In compliance with the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work in St Caolan's Primary School will be on prevention. The Principal and Vice Principal, along with all staff will proactively work towards reducing the number of bullying incidents in the school. They will always be vigilant to signs of distress and bullying behaviours.

The following strategies will be implemented,

- At all times staff will actively promote positive relationships characterised by respect, tolerance, friendship and co-operation among and between children and staff.
- Communicating the Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying policy and procedures to everyone in the school community including non-teaching staff, parents and pupils.
- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy. School Rules displayed, known and followed. Classroom rules agreed and followed by all pupils.

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- At Friday Assembly publicly acknowledging by rewarding with a certificate the children who have been kind, a good friend, or showing signs of being caring.
- High level of adult supervision particularly during unstructured times. Proactive use of Playground Buddies. Teaching and Supervisory Staff to monitor and report incidents of any concern to Principal, Vice Principal or teachers.
- Clear procedures to be followed where teaching staff deals with first incident of misbehaviour and if misbehaviours persist from individual children they are reported to Principal or Vice Principal.
- Staff training on procedures for dealing with and monitoring incidents of reported bullying. Recording incidents of bullying and storage of records.
- Provision and promotion of Breakfast, Foundation Stage and After School Clubs aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships. With opportunities for children to develop appropriate social skills.
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities. November is designated as Anti Bullying month, lessons taught and school assemblies where 'Tell someone to get help' message is reinforced.
- Development of peer-led systems, the Primary Seven Class to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school, involved in developing the policy and engaged as playground monitors.
- Class visits by NSPCC to work with all classes. Worry /suggestion boxes provided for children in Key Stage Two.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- The theme of bullying will be specifically addressed across several subject areas;
- In Religious Education through the RE scheme Grow in Love and assemblies dealing with respect for others and Catholic Christian values .
- In Literacy using stories, plays and poems as springboards for discussions.
- In Drama using role play and social stories to teach children with social and communication difficulties and young children what to do. Encouraging children to speak out if they are frightened, teaching pupil awareness and strategies to use.
- In Art through illustrations promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion.
- In PDMU including the use of the Living Learning Together Programme and the Emotional Literacy Programme. Circle Time will be used in all classes to enhance and encourage co-operation among children and to provide a safe and secure atmosphere in which children can raise issues of concern Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- In our Shared Education Project with Derryboy Primary School Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- In UICT- lessons on E-Safety to include cyber bullying, internet safety and the safe use of mobile phones.

Under the new legislation, schools must state within their policy the preventative measures they will put in place to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school.

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While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, children attending St Caolan's Primary School will be taught to take pride in their school and reminded that they are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community.

The new legislation also gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school.

St Caolan's Primary School will help raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support their pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. By

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies e.g. Bee Safe Initiative to support the promotion of key messages.
- Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas E -Safety Policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy is one of several policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies used in St Caolan's Primary School.

Section 7 Responsibility

Everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of St Caolan's Primary School.

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour

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- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- know how to seek support
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section 8 Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils can report bullying concerns, including:

- Talking to any member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff
- By posting a comment in the 'Worry Box'

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, this message should focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. We remind parents/carers of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher

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- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Mr Mc Veigh the teacher who has responsibility for Child Protection.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Mr Val Mc Murray.

While most reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, St Caolan's Primary School will be open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 9 Responding to a Bullying Concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible will

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Identify any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further intentions as necessary

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St Caolan's Primary School will follow the NIABF recommendations to responding to bullying behaviour which advocates a restorative approach.

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff will implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved.

Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour following the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Any information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 Recording

St Caolan's Primary School will show compliance to the legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- how the bullying behaviour was displayed?
- the motivation for the behaviour
- how each incident was addressed by the school?
- the outcome of the interventions employed.

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

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Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

St Caolan's Primary School recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff.

- staff will be provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD/ Safeguarding and Child Protection training
- amendments will be made to the Policy and Procedures when required because of any staff training issues.
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Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted
- identify trends and priorities for action
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlight the need for such a review. It will also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and considering new guidance.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before September 2023

Section 12 Links to Other Policies

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

Care has been taken by the Principal Mrs Cassidy to ensure that all policies are consistent.